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**APPENDIX 2**

**RURAL ISSUES**

**The Metropolitan Green Belt**

The area of the District falling within the Metropolitan Green Belt is indicated on the Proposals Map accompanying this Plan.

In accordance with Policy C4 of the Replacement Structure Plan, the Council has carried out a full review of the District's inner Green Belt boundaries. A number of modifications to the boundaries have been made in response to this study, both to remove small areas of land from the Green Belt that did not logically belong within it (having regard to the five purposes of Green Belts set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts), and to take other parcels of land into the Green Belt that did. It is considered that the resulting Green Belt boundaries are both logical and defensible in the long term.

The Council's overall objectives in applying the five basic Green Belt purposes will continue to be as follows:

- To prevent the further expansion of the built-up areas of adjacent districts.
- To prevent the process of coalescence of the settlements within Rochford District with Southend-on-Sea.
- To prevent the process of coalescence of the towns and villages within Rochford District.
- To preserve the character of the historic towns of Rochford and Rayleigh, and the villages of Great Wakering, Canewdon, Paglesham Eastend and Paglesham Churchend.
- To promote the process of urban regeneration in settlements within Rochford District and within the urban areas of neighbouring districts.

The application of the Green Belt purposes through the objectives identified above will have the combined effect of protecting the historic fabric of the district, preventing the further encroachment of development into the countryside and of safeguarding the countryside to provide for recreational needs and the protection of the natural features, flora, fauna and their habitats.

The Council also recognises that by diverting development and population growth away from rural areas to existing urban areas, Green Belt policy also assists in the achievement of sustainability objectives.

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**Development within the Green Belt**

In order to maintain the objectives of Green Belt policy it is essential that future development proposals continue to be strictly controlled.

Taking into account the government guidance of PPG2 and the Replacement Structure Plan, the policy for development in the Green Belt will be as follows:

**POLICY R1 - DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT**

**Within the Metropolitan Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. Except in very special circumstances, planning permission will not be granted unless for :-**

- (i) development required for agriculture or forestry in accordance with Policies R4, R5, R9 and R10;**
- (ii) the extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings in accordance with the criteria defined in Policies R2, R6 and R7;**
- (iii) limited affordable housing for local community needs within or immediately adjoining existing villages, in accordance with the criteria defined in Policy R3;**
- (iv) essential small-scale facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation in accordance with the criteria defined in Policy R[insert no.];**
- (v) the re-use or adaptation of existing buildings in accordance with the criteria defined in Policy R11;**
- (vi) mineral extraction and related restoration; or,**
- (vii) cemeteries, or other uses of land which fulfil the objectives of the Green Belt.**

**Development which may be permitted under this policy should preserve the openness of the Green Belt and should not conflict with the main purposes of including land within it. Any development which is permitted should be of a scale, design and siting such that the character of the countryside is not harmed.**

**[MINUTE 120/01]**

**Rural Settlement Areas**

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Development in many settlements and hamlets within the Green Belt (e.g. Rawreth, Battlesbridge, Paglesham Eastend and the Plotlands) is considered to be of such a sporadic nature that to allow any new dwellings would have a detrimental effect on the visual appearance of the Green Belt and the existing open character of such settlements.

There are, however, several areas / ribbons of residential development that are already fairly built-up and have little scope for infilling or rounding-off. In the Local Plan First Review such areas were not subject to the fairly restrictive policy relating to extensions that applied elsewhere in the Green Belt, but to a policy regime more similar to that applied in residential areas. Green Belt control was, however, maintained in all other respects and applications for the replacement of dwellings were considered on their merits. This approach has proved effective in practice, and a similarly worded policy relating to extensions is set out below:

**POLICY R2 - RURAL SETTLEMENTS AREAS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT**

**Within the following rural settlement areas:-**

- (i) Central Avenue/Pevensey Gardens, Hullbridge;**
- (ii) Pooles Lane, Hullbridge;**
- (iii) Windsor Gardens, Hawkwell;**
- (iv) Rectory Road/Hall Road, Hawkwell;**
- (v) Barling Road/Rebels Lane, Great Wakering;**
- (vi) Stonebridge, Barling;**
- (vii) Hall road, Rochford; and,**
- (viii) Bullwood Hall Lane and High Road, Hockley,**

**planning applications for extensions to dwellings within the territorial limits as defined in Appendix [insert number] will be treated on their individual merits having due regard to :-**

**(A) the character of the development already existing in the settlement;**

**(B) the visual amenities of the area; and**

**(C) housing design policy [insert number].**

**[MINUTE 120/01]**

**Agricultural and Forestry Dwellings**

Government guidance allows for the provision of new dwellings in cases where the existence of on-site accommodation is crucial to the success of an agricultural or forestry business. Whilst Policy R4 is primarily aimed at these types of business, it is recognised that there may be other rural businesses where a similar case for on-site accommodation can be demonstrated, e.g. in

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respect of certain equestrian enterprises. Such proposals should also be considered having regard to this policy.

The policy follows the 'functional' and 'financial' tests described in Annex I of PPG7 (The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development), and seeks to establish whether there is a functional need for someone to live on the site, whether the enterprise is, or will become financially viable, and whether such viability is likely to be sustainable in the long term.

To enable the proper consideration of these matters, applications should be accompanied by full business plans and/or appraisals carried out by suitably qualified people (e.g. agricultural consultants) and, in respect of applications for dwellinghouses, fully audited accounts for the three years preceding the application. Applicants will be expected to be able to demonstrate that the enterprise provides sufficient income for investment in the business (e.g. money for buildings, machinery, livestock, etc.) in line with the business plan, in addition to income for the construction of the house, personal / family and other needs.

Before permission can be granted for a permanent dwellinghouse, it is crucial for an applicant to demonstrate that his business is economically viable, and has every prospect of remaining so in the longer term. Thus, in the case of a new business, an application should first be made for the stationing of a mobile home, or another type of temporary accommodation. If a proposal meets the criteria set out below, permission for a mobile home will usually be granted for a period of three years to give the applicant sufficient time to establish his business, and so meet these objectives. Assuming the business is successful, consideration can then be given to the provision of a permanent dwellinghouse. Permission for the siting of a mobile home will not, however, be granted for a period exceeding three years, nor will permissions normally be renewed if, at the end of the temporary period, the business is still not viable.

Careful consideration should be given to the siting of new dwellings to ensure that they meet the identified functional need, but are also well-related to existing buildings. Such consideration should also extend to the siting of mobile homes, as it will not normally be appropriate to grant permission for a mobile home in a location where a permanent dwelling would not be permitted. Planting schemes will be required to further reduce the visual impact of dwellings in the landscape.

PPG7 provides advice regarding the size of dwellings, stating in Annex I, paragraph 11, that these should be, 'of a size commensurate with the established functional requirement.' The guidance goes on to add that it is the requirement of the enterprise, and not the owner or occupier, that is relevant to determining the size of a dwelling that is appropriate to a particular holding.

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In practice, however, it has proved difficult to arrive at an appropriate size of dwelling with applicants on the basis of this rather loosely worded guidance. Therefore, to avoid ambiguity, and provide a policy that is reasonable and can be consistently applied, the policy below requires that new farm dwellings should not exceed a gross habitable floorspace of 140sq.m., unless it can be demonstrated that the functional need of the holding truly requires a larger property.

It is considered reasonable to permit farmhouses to be extended by the same amount as other dwellings in the countryside (see Policy R6). New farm dwellings may, therefore, be designed with a total habitable floorspace of 175sq.m. (140sq.m + 35sq.m). In such cases, it will be necessary to impose a planning condition withdrawing permitted development rights.

Further extensions expressly required to serve the agricultural use being carried out on the holding (e.g. wash rooms, drying rooms, farm offices) will be considered on their individual merits.

Planning conditions will be imposed to limit the occupation of all new dwellings to persons employed, or last employed, in agriculture in the locality. This will ensure that dwellings are kept available to meet the needs of other agricultural businesses in the area as a whole if, for whatever reason, a dwelling is no longer required to meet the needs of the original business. The combination of agricultural occupancy conditions with a policy criterion restricting the scale of agricultural dwellings to modest proportions will help to maintain a supply of housing that is available (and affordable) to agricultural workers, thus avoiding a proliferation of new houses in the open countryside. Applications for the removal of agricultural occupancy conditions will not, therefore, be permitted except in the most exceptional circumstances.

**POLICY R4 - AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY DWELLINGS**

**Within the Green Belt planning permission will be granted for permanent dwellings for agricultural workers provided that:-**

- (i) it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for at least one person to be present on the holding at most times of the day and night;**
- (ii) the functional need relates to a full-time agricultural / horticultural worker;**
- (iii) the unit and the agricultural enterprise in question, have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound and have every prospect of remaining so in the long term;**

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- (iv) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another dwelling on the unit, or any other accommodation in the area as a whole that is suitable for, and available to, the worker(s) concerned;
- (v) no dwelling or other building suitable for conversion to a dwelling has recently been sold or let by the applicant that would have otherwise met the functional need;
- (vi) the size of the dwelling is commensurate with the established functional requirement of the unit. (Dwellings will normally be expected to be bungalows or chalets and should not, in any case, accommodate in excess of 140sq.m of habitable floorspace. If the applicant wishes the dwelling to incorporate the 35sq.m of additional floorspace allowed for under Policy R6 from the outset, the Local Planning Authority will impose a planning condition withdrawing permitted development rights to further extend the floorspace of the dwelling); and,
- (vii) the proposal satisfies the provisions of Policy R1.

Permissions for new farm dwellings will be subject to conditions, inter alia, to restrict their occupation to persons solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in agriculture in the locality and remove permitted development rights in order to control their scale and appearance.

[MINUTE 120/01]

**POLICY R5 - TEMPORARY AGRICULTURAL DWELLINGS**

Within the Green Belt planning permission will be granted for the stationing of mobile homes for agricultural workers provided that:-

- (i) it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for at least one person to be present on the holding at most times of the day and night;
- (ii) the functional need relates to a full-time agricultural / horticultural worker;
- (iii) there is clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned;
- (iv) there is clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;

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- (v) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another dwelling on the unit, or any other accommodation in the area as a whole that is suitable for, and available to, the worker(s) concerned;
- (vi) the proposal satisfies the provisions of Policy R1.

**Permissions for mobile homes will be subject to conditions, inter alia, to restrict their occupation to persons solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in agriculture in the locality and require their removal from the holding after a maximum period of three years.**

[MINUTE 120/01]

**Extension and Alteration of Dwellings in the Green Belt Outside the Rural Settlement Areas covered by Policy R2**

It is entirely reasonable for those living in the Green Belt to be able to extend their properties to some degree, to cater for changing family needs. However, it is equally reasonable that the scale of such extensions be restricted to ensure that they do not prejudice the stated purposes of the Green Belt.

Besides causing visual harm by increasing the visual impact of properties in the countryside, extensions can also raise the occupancy potential of dwellings, thus increasing the population living in the Green Belt and, as a corollary, car dependency and traffic generation. Extensions also raise the value of properties, and so reduce the supply of small units of accommodation available to those employed in rural areas. This can also lead to additional car use, since those employed in rural areas may not be able to secure an affordable home close to their place of work. Thus, establishing a policy that seeks to restrict extensions to a reasonable size is crucial to sustainability.

Policy C2 of the Replacement Structure Plan allows for 'limited extensions' to existing dwellings,' echoing the guidance of PPG2: Green Belts (1995). The phrase 'limited extensions' replaces the phrase 'reasonable extensions' which appeared in the previous version of PPG2, in addition to the earlier Structure Plan policy. However, it is not considered that this change of wording implies that a more, or less, restrictive policy towards extensions should now be adopted.

Policy R6 (formerly called Policy GB7) has been successfully implemented by the Council since 1988, and has been well supported on appeal. Given this, and the foregoing, it is not considered that the policy requires amendment.

The policy allows dwellings to be extended by up to 35 sq.m of living area floorspace, taking into consideration any floorspace constructed or provided

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without the requirement of planning permission. By setting the maximum size of extension at 35sq.m, the Council has sought to permit a reasonable size of extension that is not out of scale with the original dwelling.

The adoption of a maximum allowance also allows applications to be dealt with in an even-handed and consistent manner, and avoids claims of 'unfairness' that could result if extensions of different sizes were allowed on neighbouring properties.

With all extensions the Local Planning Authority will wish to ensure that the character and setting of the dwelling is maintained and in the interests of good design this will normally mean, for example, pitched rather than flat roofs. Pitched roof should be constructed at a low angle to render the floor area of the roof space unusable for living accommodation. Where this is not possible a planning condition or legal agreement removing those rights will be required.

Policy R6 is intended to cover all reasonable requirements, and there should be no requirement to breach it, except in exceptional circumstances.

**POLICY R6 - THE EXTENSION OF DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT**

**Extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt outside the rural settlement areas defined in Policy R2 will be restricted in size. Planning permission will be granted for extensions provided that:-**

- (i) the total size of the dwelling as extended will not exceed the original habitable floor space by more than 35 square metres in floor area;**
- (ii) the proposal does not involve a material increase in the overall height of the property;**
- (iii) the proposal does not harm the character of the countryside;**
- (iv) the proposal does not give rise to the formation of a self-contained unit of accommodation (e.g. a 'granny flat');**
- (v) all parts of the existing dwelling to remain after the extension(s) have been provided are structurally sound; and,**
- (vi) the proposal accords with housing design Policy [insert number];**

**In permitting extensions in accordance with the above, the Local Planning Authority will, in appropriate cases, impose planning conditions to restrict the habitable floorspace of the property to that illustrated on the approved plans.**

**[MINUTE 120/01]**

**NOTES TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH POLICIES R6 AND R7:**

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*The original habitable floorspace of the dwelling is defined as the habitable floor area of the dwelling existing on 1st July 1948 or as built after that date. If a dwelling is a replacement of an earlier property, original habitable floorspace relates to the floor area of the earlier, rather than the replacement, dwelling.*

*The total habitable floorspace of a dwelling comprises the total floor area being used for habitable purposes, or capable of such use without conversion. Any parts of a dwelling that cannot be used for habitable purposes without conversion (e.g. attached garages, loft spaces, cellars, etc. ) should be excluded from the calculation. The floorspace of outbuildings will not normally be considered habitable. Exceptions may be made in cases where, for example, an existing property has no inside bathroom / toilet. In such a case it would normally be appropriate to allow the provision of an extension to the dwelling (of the same footprint) to house such facilities, without prejudice to the 35sq.m allowance set out above.*

*The floor area of a property should be measured gross between the unfinished internal faces of external walls. In other words, the floor area should include the area taken up by all internal walls, chimneys, etc., but exclude the area taken up by the external walls. Staircases should be included as part of the floor area, stairwells should not.*

*A self-contained unit is defined as accommodation with independent access and comprising bed/living room, kitchen and bathroom accommodation.*

**The Replacement or Rebuild of Dwellings in the Green Belt Outside the Rural Settlement Areas covered by Policy R2**

The issues identified above relating to extensions apply equally to the replacement or rebuild of existing dwellings. To ensure consistency between these policies, the floor area of a replacement dwelling should not be any greater than 35sq.m above the original floor area of the dwelling it replaces.

In the majority of cases, applications are made for dwellings incorporating the maximum floor area allowed for under the policy. In such cases, conditions, or, in appropriate cases, legal agreements withdrawing permitted development rights (including the conversion of roof and garage space to habitable rooms) will need to be imposed in order to ensure that alterations cannot be made to the new dwelling without the consent of the Local Planning Authority.

An alternative method of ensuring that a roof area cannot be converted to habitable accommodation is, as discussed above, to utilise a low pitch of roof

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that renders the area within it unusable for such purposes. The use of a low pitch has the additional benefit that the overall visual impact of the dwelling is reduced. Indeed, the visual impact of a property may be reduced still further if a hipped roof is used in lieu of a gabled roof.

When considering applications for replacement dwellings, the Local Planning Authority will consider which of these methods would be most effective in controlling the scale and floor area of the property in question, and will act accordingly.

The policy offers the opportunity to achieve an improvement in the appearance of many dwellings in the Green Belt, particularly those within Plotland areas. The type of materials, design, location within the plot and landscaping of the site are all matters which will be examined in great detail in order that the finished result is to a very high standard.

As a consequence of the demand for housing, the majority of Green Belt dwellings have been maintained in reasonable condition. However, a number of dwellings have not been occupied for many years and are now effectively derelict. Such dwellings do not fall to be considered under this policy. Only dwellings that are in a reasonable state of repair and are currently occupied, or have been until very recently, will be considered as appropriate candidates for replacement.

Policy R7 is intended to cover all reasonable requirements, and there should be no requirement to breach it, except in exceptional circumstances.

**POLICY R7 - THE REPLACEMENT OR REBUILD OF EXISTING DWELLINGS  
IN THE GREEN BELT**

**The replacement or rebuild of existing dwellings in the Metropolitan Green Belt will, in principle, be permitted taking account of the following criteria:**

- (i) the total size of the new dwelling is no greater than:**
  - (A) 35 square metres in floor area above the size of the habitable floorspace of the original dwelling;**
  - (B) the size of the original dwelling together with the maximum permitted development allowance provided for by Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995; or,**
  - (C) the size of the habitable floorspace of the dwelling lawfully existing at the time of the application;**
- (ii) the condition of the original dwelling;**

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- (iii) the visual mass of the new dwelling should be no greater than that of the existing dwelling (taking into consideration any additional mass allowed for in respect of criterion (i)(A) or (B), above). The overall height of the replacement dwelling should not exceed that of the existing dwelling, unless a modest increase in height can be justified on design or visual amenity grounds. Where the existing dwelling is a bungalow it should be replaced by a bungalow;
- (iv) the replacement dwelling will be expected to be sited in the same location within the plot as the original, unless an alternative siting is perceived to be more appropriate in Green Belt or amenity terms;
- (v) where resiting is agreed, arrangements are secured to ensure the demolition of the replaced dwelling and its outbuildings and the reinstatement of their site; and
- (vi) housing design policy [insert number].

Planning conditions or legal agreements will be used in appropriate cases to prevent the erection of extensions to the dwelling or the conversion of roofspaces, garages, etc., to habitable floorspace.

Proposals for the replacement or rebuild of dwellings sited within the rural settlement areas defined in Policy R2 will be considered on their merits having due regard to sections (ii) to (vi) of this policy.

**NOTE:** The definition of certain terms used in the above policy is found at the foot of Policy R6.

[MINUTE 120/01]

**Extensions to Domestic Gardens**

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of applications for the extension of private gardens on the fringe of urban areas into farmland or other open land in the Green Belt. Garden extensions can be injurious to the visual appearance of the Green Belt particularly with the propensity for the erection of additional buildings, fences and other structures. Furthermore, they can affect high quality agricultural land (grades 1,2 and 3a) or disturb important sites of nature conservation interest.

In the light of their impact, the Local Planning Authority will therefore only grant consent for domestic garden extensions into the Green Belt in the most exceptional circumstances, e.g. where it can clearly be demonstrated that a proposal will not affect the visual appearance of the Green Belt.

In order to fully reflect the Local Planning Authority's concerns about garden extensions, the following policy will apply:

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**POLICY R8 - THE EXTENSION OF DOMESTIC GARDENS**

**The extension of domestic gardens into the Green Belt will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not materially affect the openness of the Green Belt or prejudice the Council's Green Belt Strategy, set out above.**

[MINUTE 120/01]

**Agricultural Buildings**

Whilst government guidance indicates that the construction of new agricultural buildings is not inappropriate, in principle, within the Green Belt, such guidance also indicates that buildings should not significantly reduce openness, and should be of a design and scale appropriate to their rural surroundings. This advice is echoed by Structure Plan Policy C2 and, in turn, by the final paragraph of Policy R1, set out above.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 allows many new farm buildings to be built without the necessity of full planning permission. However, in such cases, the Local Planning Authority is still required to determine whether its prior approval is required for the siting, design and external appearance of the building and, if such approval is considered necessary, whether the details provided are acceptable.

The advent of mechanised agriculture twinned with the need to handle bulk produce has led to vast changes in the design and scale of agricultural buildings. Whereas 'traditional' timber and brick buildings were of attractive design and human scale, modern buildings are generally of utilitarian, quasi-industrial appearance and their sheer size makes them difficult to assimilate into the District's flat rural landscape. It is, therefore, crucial that careful consideration is given to matters of design and siting to ensure that the visual impact of such buildings is minimised. Whilst it is common practice to group buildings together in order to reduce their visual impact, attention should be paid to the appearance and character of the existing buildings. If the existing buildings are attractive, traditional buildings of timber or brick, it may not be appropriate to site a large, steel-clad building next to them. This could appear discordant, and detract from the character of the existing group. Detailed advice on matters of design and siting is provided in Annex D of PPG7.

In addition to considering proposals for new agricultural buildings, or extensions to existing buildings, in the light of Policy R1, such applications will be considered having regard to the following policy:

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**POLICY R9 - NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS**

**Whilst being mindful of the operational requirements of new agricultural buildings, the Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that such buildings are of a design, external appearance and siting that:-**

- (i) minimises their visual impact in the landscape; and,**
  - (ii) respects the character and appearance of nearby buildings.**
- [MINUTE 120/01]

**The Re-Use and Adaptation of Existing Rural Buildings**

A large number of buildings in the rural landscape are currently unused. Many were built for the purposes of agriculture, but are incompatible with modern day farming methods. Others originally served as telephone exchanges, pumping stations, etc. Many of these buildings are of substantial and sound construction and could be re-used without major alteration or rebuilding.

The Government is keen to promote the diversification of the rural economy in order to provide employment opportunities for local people and sustain rural communities. Putting empty rural buildings back to beneficial use is key to this policy.

PPG7 states that preference should be given to the re-use of buildings for business purposes. In addition to assisting rural enterprise, such uses can also provide a source of employment close to home, thus reducing the travel to work distance for those living in the more remote settlements. It should be made clear, however, that proposals that rely upon the use of adjoining land (e.g. builders yards, haulage depots, etc.) will not be permitted.

Government guidance is less positive towards residential conversions since these do not bring the economic benefits associated with business re-use, and can result in a dispersed pattern of settlement, which increases both the need to travel and car dependency. Moreover, the domestic paraphernalia associated with dwellings can affect the character and openness of the surrounding countryside. Experience has also shown that to bring them up to habitable standards, buildings often need to be considerably altered (e.g. by the insertion of additional windows, internal partitions, etc.) which can destroy their character and integrity. This is clearly unacceptable in the case of listed buildings.

Policy R10, below, takes all of these factors into account. Applications for retail use should additionally be considered against Policy R12.

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**POLICY R10 - THE RE-USE AND ADAPTATION OF EXISTING RURAL BUILDINGS**

**Within the Metropolitan Green Belt the re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings will be permitted, provided that:**

- (i) the proposal relates to a building with a form, bulk and general design in keeping with its surroundings;**
- (ii) the proposal relates to a building of permanent and substantial construction, that is capable of conversion to the proposed use without major or complete reconstruction;**
- (iii) the proposal involves no extension to the building, nor would any extension be necessary in order to carry out the proposed use;**
- (iv) the proposed use of the building and associated land would not have a materially greater impact than the permitted / lawful use on the openness of the Green Belt or the fulfilment of its purposes;**
- (v) the proposed use would not introduce additional activity or traffic movements likely to materially and adversely affect the character of the Green Belt or place unacceptable pressures on the surrounding rural road network; and,**
- (vi) in the case of a change to residential use, the applicant has first made every reasonable attempt to secure a suitable business re-use.**

**Where the conversion of a building to residential use is permitted, a planning condition will be imposed withdrawing permitted development rights to alter or extend the building. The residential conversion of listed farm buildings will not normally be permitted.**

**[MINUTE 120/01]**

**Farm Diversification**

To help the farming industry become more competitive, diverse and robust, PPG7 promotes the diversification of farming enterprises. Examples cited include farm-based food processing and packing and the hiring or repairing of farm machinery. Whilst the guidance makes it clear that proposals should ideally make use of existing buildings, it does note that new buildings (either to replace existing buildings or to accommodate the expansion of enterprises) or, indeed,

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extensions to existing buildings, may be acceptable in certain circumstances. Applications will be determined in accordance with the following policy:

**POLICY R11 - FARM DIVERSIFICATION**

**Within the Metropolitan Green Belt, the re-use of buildings in farm diversification schemes will be permitted, provided that the proposed use would complement the agricultural operations on the farm and be operated as part of the holding. The extension of an existing building or the erection of a new building (either to replace an existing building or to accommodate the expansion of an existing enterprise) may exceptionally be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the proposal would satisfy sustainable development objectives. All applications will be expected to comply with Policies R9 and R10.**

[MINUTE 127/02]

**New Retail Uses**

The closure of many village shops and post offices means that the residents of certain of the District's smaller settlements have to travel in order to buy food and other convenience goods. This conflicts with sustainability objectives and, clearly, impacts upon the elderly or those without access to a car. The re-use of existing buildings to provide such functions will, therefore, be encouraged, subject to residential amenity and traffic issues being met.

The re-use of an existing building as a farm shop selling a wide range of produce can also meet sustainability objectives, in particular where it serves a small settlement lacking a village shop. (Indeed, in such a case, its evolution into 'the village shop' would, in principle, be encouraged.) However, there may be cases where a farm shop selling a broad range of produce could threaten the viability of an existing village shop, the closure of which would be contrary to sustainability objectives. Applications for farm shops will, therefore, be assessed having regard to both their positive and negative aspects.

The re-use of rural buildings for other retail uses (i.e. for the sale of comparison goods) will not normally be permitted. Such uses generally result in additional traffic movements in the countryside and, indeed, the District as a whole. The routing of additional traffic along country lanes, and away from Town Centre shopping areas, harms the character of the Green Belt and conflicts with the principles of sustainability.

**POLICY R12 - NEW RETAIL USES**

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Within the Metropolitan Green Belt, planning permission will not be granted for the construction of new buildings for retail use, or for the re-use of existing buildings for the sale of comparison goods. The re-use of buildings for retail use may, however, be permitted if the application proposes:

- (i) a general store, intended to sell a broad range of convenience goods, and well located in relation to the settlement it is intended to serve; or,
- (ii) a farm shop situated on an agricultural holding, and intended to sell food, whether processed or unprocessed, produced on that holding, in addition to food and other convenience goods from elsewhere;

Applications for farm shops will be considered having regard to the potential impact on nearby village shops. Where such a use would likely result in a significant adverse effect on a village shop, or shops, a planning condition may be imposed to limit the broad types of goods sold. Applications will additionally be expected to comply with Policy R10, above.

**Note:** planning permission is not normally required to use an existing building on a farm for the sale of food or drink products, whether processed or unprocessed, produced on that farm. In addition, permission is not normally required if a minimal quantity of goods not produced on that farm (up to 10% of the range of goods) is also sold.

[MINUTE 127/02]

**Cemeteries and Crematoria**

The District is currently served by the Council's own cemetery at Hall Road, Hawkwell, in addition to a number of smaller burial grounds associated with parish churches. Hall Road cemetery is likely to reach capacity within the next twenty years, and Policy R13, below, allocates additional land in order to provide an extension to this cemetery to meet the District's burial needs in the long-term.

**POLICY R13 - HALL ROAD CEMETERY**

**Allocation is made for the extension of the existing cemetery in Hall Road, Rochford, as indicated on Proposals Map [insert number].**

[NEW]

Cemeteries fall amongst the uses of land normally considered appropriate within the Green Belt. Applications for new cemeteries will be assessed having regard to Policy R14, below. Consideration will be given to the scale of any ancillary

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buildings and the siting and appearance of car parks, and to the existence of existing landscaping and / or the provision of new landscaping to limit the visual impact of the use. Consideration will also be given to the general location of the cemetery, having regard to its accessibility from the District's main settlements by car and by public transport.

**POLICY R14 - NEW CEMETERIES**

**Permission will be granted for the provision of new cemeteries, or the extension of existing cemeteries, subject to compliance with the following criteria:-**

- (i) the proposal meets the requirements of Policy R[insert no.]; and,**
- (ii) the site is in close proximity to one (or more) of the District's main settlements, and is readily accessible by car and, ideally, public transport.**

**Notwithstanding compliance with criterion (i), above, the Local Planning Authority will impose a planning condition requiring the implementation of a suitable landscaping scheme to further reduce the visual impact of the use.**

[NEW]

**Crematoria**

Rochford does not have a crematorium. However, it is considered that the District's needs are satisfactorily met by the existing facility at Sutton Road, Southend-on-Sea. There are, in addition, crematoria at Basildon and Chelmsford. Given the foregoing, it is not considered necessary to seek to provide such a facility with Rochford District.

**Mineral Working and Tipping**

These are matters dealt with by the County Council under the relevant legislation contained in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and taking account of policies contained in the Replacement Structure Plan, the Minerals Local Plan and Waste Local Plan. The Local Planning Authority is consulted on all planning applications for mineral extraction and tipping proposals.

The Local Planning Authority will wish to ensure that the visual impact of such developments on the Green Belt is kept to a minimum and that the amenities of local residents are protected. The reinstatement and future use are also important considerations as is the ability of the highway network to handle the volume and type of traffic generated.

The Local Planning Authority will, therefore, oppose applications for mineral working and tipping which are detrimental to visual or residential amenities or where the highway network is unsuited to the type or level of traffic likely to be generated.

**APPENDIX 2**

**Statutory Undertakers**

The Local Planning Authority will be sympathetic to the reasonable requirements of Statutory Undertakers (e.g. water, gas and electricity suppliers, sewage undertakers, etc.), in relation to the maintenance and improvement of existing services or to the provision of new services or undertakings, provided that an overriding need for such services can be shown and that such services cannot reasonably be provided on land excluded from the Green Belt.